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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 NAIROBI 002525

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TAGS: [EAIR](#) [EFIN](#) [KCRM](#) [KE](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [SO](#) [SU](#)  
SUBJECT: MEETING WITH PRESIDENT KIBAKI

REF: A. NAIROBI 02104

[1](#)B. NAIROBI 02215

Classified By: AMB RANNEBERGER FOR REASONS 1.4 B&D

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary: During a June 9 meeting, the Ambassador discussed with President Kibaki the expanding bilateral partnership, the problem of insecurity, governance issues, the elections set for later this year, and regional issues (Somalia and Sudan). Kibaki emphasized his desire to work closely with the U.S. on all issues. End Summary.

2.(SBU) During an hour and a half meeting with the Ambassador on June 9, at the Ambassador's request, a relaxed President Kibaki was expansive on a wide array of issues. The only other participant was Kibaki,s senior adviser Stanley Murage, who acted as notetaker.

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Bilateral Partnership  
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[1](#)3. (SBU) The Ambassador started by noting the excellent state of bilateral relations. He briefed Kibaki on continuing expansion of the U.S.-Kenyan partnership, leaving a non-paper that detailed specific programs (PEPFAR expansion, the Presidential Malaria Initiative, the Women,s Justice and Empowerment Initiative, and the MCC threshold program, among others). Kibaki emphasized his commitment to continuing to strengthen bilateral relations, emphasizing that the U.S. is Kenya,s most important partner. The Ambassador indicated that he would be following up with the President to lay out ways in which the partnership can be further expanded. He specifically noted the potential value to Kenya and the U.S. of achieving a Safe Skies agreement. The Ambassador pointed out that Kenyan authorities have moved too slowly to put in place necessary programs and actions. Kibaki said that he would like to accelerate progress. (The Ambassador is following up with a letter to Kibaki laying out precisely the steps that need to be taken.)

[1](#)4. (SBU) Kibaki said that he had been looking forward to welcoming Mrs. Bush, and lamented that the visit had been canceled. The Ambassador indicated that the cancellation was due to logistical reasons and in no way reflected on the excellent bilateral relationship.

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Elections  
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5.(C) The Ambassador raised the issue of the Kenyan national elections set for December of this year. Kibaki referred in positive terms to the speech that the Ambassador gave on the elections at the University of Nairobi (ref A). The Ambassador reviewed the assistance that the U.S. is providing for the electoral process and gave Kibaki a copy of the

electoral principles laid out in the speech. The Ambassador noted that, among a number of issues, it is particularly important to ensure the independence of the national electoral commission and continuity in its leadership (since the term of the respected head of the commission expires in early December). He also emphasized the need to ensure the broadest possible registration of voters, particularly in order to avoid allegations that certain tribal areas are being favored over others. The President stated that he is strongly committed to ensuring a credible electoral process. He said he respects the chairman of the electoral commission, who is doing a good job. He noted, however, that he could not extend the tenure of the electoral commission chairman so far in advance of the December expiration date of the chairman's term. Kibaki said he will ensure the electoral registration period is extended through July in order to provide opportunities for voter registration. He said that he has been pressing the authorities to accelerate issuance of identification cards to citizens, which are required in order to apply for voter cards.

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Insecurity  
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6.(C) The Ambassador raised the problem of insecurity, with respect to the increase in violent crime, the ever-present terrorist danger, and the violent activities of the tribally-based Mungiki criminal organization (ref B). Kibaki replied that he has made fighting insecurity a top priority. He expressed appreciation for the positive visit of Minister Michuki to Washington, and increased U.S. assistance. The Ambassador stressed the need for the government to take more effective actions, but to do so in a way that respects the rule of law and human rights. The Ambassador told Kibaki that

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U.S. efforts to assist in fighting insecurity in all forms are hampered by the difficulty of working with Commissioner of Police Ali. (Note: Ali is almost universally perceived as someone who is extremely difficult to work with.) The Ambassador noted reports that the Minister of Security does not get along with his subordinate Ali, and that there are morale problems within the police due to Ali's leadership (and partly as a result of the fact that Ali comes from the military). Senior Adviser Murage jumped in to echo the Ambassador's stated concerns, saying that the UK and others have complained about Ali and that Michuki has a pending appointment with Kibaki to discuss the issue. Kibaki expressed concern that Ali is an obstacle to effective cooperation, and said he would deal with the issue. (Murage later told the Ambassador that one solution that has been proposed is for Ali to go back to the military.) (Note: Though Ali is clearly a problem, he reportedly has a close relationship with the President's wife Lucy.)

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Money Laundering and Governance Issues  
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7.(SBU) The Ambassador urged Kibaki to make passage of anti-money laundering legislation a priority for the current legislative session. Kibaki said that it is, and indicated that the government has a team working to obtain passage.

8.(SBU) Turning to governance issues, the Ambassador congratulated Kibaki on the fact that Kenya received the UN award for its performance-based civil service reform. Kibaki talked at length and passionately about his efforts to improve governance. He emphasized his intention to hold ministries accountable to performance standards and to implement effective procurement reform. He is proud of his efforts to carry out gender balance affirmative action, emphasizing that one-third of new civil service appointments must now be women. (Note: We have independently verified that this requirement is being carried out.)

9.(SBU) Murage noted the importance of the MCC threshold program in supporting anti-corruption efforts. He said that he has been in touch with the MCC and OPIC about ways to advance programs to help meet targets required for a full compact.

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Somalia and Sudan  
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10.(C) The discussion turned to regional issues, particularly Sudan and Somalia. Kibaki reviewed in detail the state of play on both these issues. The Ambassador expressed appreciation for Kenya's diplomatic efforts on Sudan and Somalia, and emphasized our desire to work closely with Kenya. He reviewed U.S. efforts on both issues. Kibaki stressed the urgent need for security assistance for Somalia, both to facilitate the deployment of AMISOM and to train the forces of the Transitional Federal Government. Development of national military and police forces is essential to overcome competing interests, Kibaki said. He offered to have Kenya assist in the training, if resources could be provided to Kenya for that purpose. The Ambassador noted that U.S. assistance does include a security assistance component, and indicated interest in exploring possibilities for cooperation in this area. Kibaki said that the U.S. and Kenya must work together on Somalia, since it is a shared security concern.

11.(C) Kibaki said that he is extremely concerned about problems with implementation of the North/South Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in Sudan. The Ambassador asked about the status of Kenya's efforts to organize an IGAD summit to focus on this issue. Kibaki said that he wants to do this, but organizing an effective summit is proving difficult given the problems within IGAD. He blamed the northern Sudanese for failure to honor their commitments and discussed the need to have their friends send the right messages on the need to implement the CPA. Specifically, he said, the Egyptians, Chinese, and Arab countries could be helpful. Kibaki suggested that the situation in Sudan is moving towards greater polarization, with the north taking a &come and get us8 attitude while the south moves towards secession. The Ambassador raised Darfur and mentioned interest in possibly facilitating a meeting in Nairobi of non-signatories. Kibaki said Kenya would be supportive.

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Comment  
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12.(C) Kibaki was well-briefed, articulate, and focused.

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This and other meetings during recent months indicate that Kibaki is healthy and engaged. Kibaki has repeatedly indicated the value he attaches to the relationship with us. He has previously been responsive on specific issues we have raised, indicating that ) while he tends to give his ministers wide latitude ) he will sometimes intervene as necessary. He is not the totally disengaged leader struggling with health issues that is sometimes portrayed.  
RANNEBERGER